

Quality Holistic Professional Learning in Lebanon (QHPLL) Guide:

Professional Development, Community of Practice, and Teacher Leadership Resources



Written by Sara Kassab and the Co-Creative, Co-Learning QHPLL Project Team at the Center for Professional Learning



Center for Professional Learning
at Childhood Education International

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Introduction to This Guide

This guide has been developed by the Quality Holistic Professional Learning in Lebanon (QHPLL) Project team at the Center for Professional Learning (CPL) to support teachers, education leaders, researchers, and partners in Lebanon who are working to promote holistic learning for students by supporting holistic well-being, innovation, learning, and leadership among teachers. Our hope is that the resources in this booklet will support development of professional learning spaces and opportunities that uplift and sustain autonomous lifelong learning across Lebanon and complement the structured, formal professional development programs in place through Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP), universities, international/non-governmental organizations (I/NGOs), and other actors in the educator sector.

Childhood Education International's [WILL Action Framework](#) shapes the QHPLL Project, alongside the [Sustainable Learning Framework](#), [INEE's Guidance Note on Teacher Wellbeing in Emergency Contexts](#), and [Lebanon's National Social and Emotional Learning Framework](#). Throughout this guide, we hope that users will find resources that help them to create supportive and enabling environments for educators' holistic professional learning.



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About the QHPLL Project

Background and Context

The 10-month [Quality Holistic Professional Learning in Lebanon](#) (QHPLL) Project began in the fall of 2023 and wrapped up its initial phase in the summer of 2024. QHPLL's goal is to enhance inclusive, equitable, and holistic learning for children across Lebanon through the co-creation of professional learning and leadership spaces for educators.

QHPLL builds on the global [Quality Holistic Learning](#) (QHL) Project, 2021-2023, designed to enable teachers in four countries - Lebanon, Chad, Niger, and Kenya - to develop competencies in holistic learning and pedagogical, technological, and leadership skills as they co-create professional learning resources for peers working with displaced, vulnerable, and refugee students. Due to the high levels of engagement among educators in Lebanon and the connections and vision of CPL Senior Consultant, Sara Kassab, QHPLL was proposed as a way to test scaling *and* deeper, localized contextualization of open educational resources ([OERs](#)). Research literature notes that teachers who are themselves of refugee and displacement backgrounds and teachers working with displaced and vulnerable learners across Lebanon need more professional development to both meet their learners' needs and build on their talents ([Bradley et al., 2020](#); [Greaves et al., 2019](#)).

The QHPLL Project supports teachers in Lebanon as they co-create transformative changes in their schools and communities. This is a relational project, assisted by digital technologies, that centers teachers as lifelong learners and innovators, attending to their well-being and leadership growth within communities of practice (CoPs). In this way, it is designed for disruption. When war, coup, or financial ruin destabilizes systems, teachers can continue learning and serving their communities, openly sharing resources (such as OERs), forming autonomous professional learning spaces (that complement formal training), and supporting each other. Equipping and empowering teachers to lead within a context of holistic education and in self-organizing CoPs ensures inclusive, equitable, and sustained professional learning and growth, and, thus, protects delivery on the promise of inclusive, quality, holistic learning for all.

Project Goals

The QHPLL Project team met the goal of providing quality holistic professional learning opportunities for up to 1,000 educators across Lebanon by:

- Establishing teacher-led CoPs across the eight governorates of Lebanon to support teacher well-being and integrate pedagogical learning as well as increased digital literacy.
- Ensuring that educators across Lebanon have easy access to QHL OERs and enhancing the mobility of competencies and credentials so they can utilize these resources to meet their needs.
- Empowering stakeholders to equip teachers as leaders in holistic education through CoPs and professional learning spaces, ensuring inclusive, equitable, and sustained professional learning.

Processes

The QHPLL Project team began by identifying their own learning goals and needs, discussing similarities and differences across their contexts — which ranged from public to private and semi-private to INGO and community schools — and becoming familiar with the QHL OERs that were created by some continuing project members in Lebanon and colleagues from Kenya and Niger during the global phase of the project work. Project Fellows and Consultants living across the governorates of Lebanon then began outreach to peers, school and program leaders, and potential partners in their regions. This was followed by the facilitation of online, blended, and face-to-face interactive workshops to introduce QHL OERs and micro-credentials and to co-create contextualized workshops focused on social and emotional learning/psychosocial support (SEL/PSS), asset-based pedagogies, and differentiated instruction.

As CoPs started to form in-person at participating schools and in local communities, the QHPLL Project team opened three virtual CoPs on Mighty Networks (one each in English, French, and Arabic). In these spaces, which have almost 300 users as of June 2024, educators share resources, discuss their teaching practice, and find support and understanding from others who are, in many cases, experiencing similar challenges, setbacks, and triumphs. Arising from these CoPs, Project Fellows and Consultants identified a need for a deeply contextualized definition of teacher leadership in Lebanon. They worked to develop recruitment, application, selection, and retention tools for teacher leaders, particularly focusing on CoPs, coaching, and mentoring. They also worked to codify tools to support the formation and sustainability of CoPs across Lebanon.

Outcomes (Overall, and in Brief)

This guide will offer multiple points of reflection on learnings and outcomes from the project. In brief, we note here the overall numbers and impact of the project. Around 1,100 teachers have engaged in the project and 30 CoPs have been co-created across 12 cities and in 8 governorates (Akkar, Baalbeck-Hermel, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Nabatiyeh, and South Lebanon) in Lebanon. The team held 100 interactive learning sessions on OER materials and holistic pedagogies. A teacher leadership definition and credential criteria were created, and there is increased enrollment in QHL courses and consistent engagement with micro-credentials in holistic pedagogies. Importantly, Project Fellows and CPL staff have built strong relationships with formal education leaders and teacher leaders, resulting in greater use of OERs in Lebanon. This familiarity with the OERs wouldn't have existed if it weren't for the strong connections the QHPLL team have created with diverse education leaders. This has been aided by the establishment of three public Mighty Networks spaces (digital CoPs) and a dedicated private Mighty Networks project space for continuous interaction and professional communication. The team has achieved many of the project outcomes and established a caring CoP that prioritizes well-being. Despite the challenges presented by the current political climate and regional tensions, this community has great potential for future growth and positive impact on educators (by building *with* educators) in Lebanon.

QHL and Other OERs

OERs, as defined by UNESCO, are “learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.”

[The Childhood Education International OER library](#) features 40+ resources, including three micro-credentials as well as courses and facilitation guides accessible in multiple languages (most QHL resources were developed in English, French, Arabic).

QHL Courses

The online courses in the OER library range in length from three to six hours and cover a range of topics. The following courses are available for free in English, French, and Arabic (unless otherwise noted) in the OER library:

- I. [**Asset \(Strength\) Based Pedagogies for Quality Holistic Learning**](#)
This self-paced course introduces teachers to asset- or strength-based pedagogies. It provides an overview of key terminology, concepts, and practices related to asset- or strength-based pedagogies.
- II. [**Asset-Based Pedagogies in Displacement Settings**](#)
This open, self-paced course was designed by teachers for teachers, especially those working with refugee and vulnerable learners around the world. It is intended to provide an overview of key terminology, concepts, and practices related to asset- or strength-based pedagogies. It is a continuation of the general Asset-Based Pedagogies course.
- III. [**Differentiated Instruction for Quality Holistic Learning**](#)
In this course, teachers receive an overview of key terminology, concepts, and practices related to differentiated instruction, gaining a working understanding of what it is and why it is important. In addition, they will be able to identify the different learning styles and understand the ways in which a teacher can differentiate.
- IV. [**Differentiated Instruction in Displacement Settings**](#)
This course is intended to give participants ideas about how to weave differentiation into their own teaching practice when working with displaced or refugee learners. It is a continuation of the general Differentiated Instruction for Quality Holistic Learning course and focuses more on how teachers can differentiate in displacement contexts and when working with refugees and other vulnerable populations.
- V. [**Introduction to SEL & PSS for Quality Holistic Learning**](#)
This online course was developed based on the workshop materials designed with Project Fellows in Niger. This course introduces SEL, PSS, and safe, holistic learning spaces. This is a self-paced (non-facilitated) learning course.

VI. [Integrating SEL & PSS Into Lessons for QHL and Facilitation Guide](#)

This online course and accompanying facilitation guide were created with Project Fellows in Lebanon. The course assumes that learners have some familiarity with SEL and PSS and focuses on the why and how of SEL integration in lessons, including a look at evaluation of materials, adaptation of resources for specific contexts, and assessment of learning. It is recommended that this course be taken with a facilitator, but it can be self-paced. The course and facilitation guide are available in both English and Arabic.

QHL Workshop Slide Decks

Created to facilitate offline learning as well as facilitator-led workshops, the following slide deck resources are available in the OER library:

I. **Offline SEL Workshop Packet Decks & Accompanying [Facilitation Guide](#)**

This manual supports the delivery of four introductory workshops that focus on QHL in crisis contexts through SEL. The training is organized into 4 interactive workshops:

Module 1: [Introduction](#)

Module 2: [Psychosocial Support](#)

Module 3: [SEL Competencies](#)

Module 4: [Learning Spaces](#)

Developed by QHL Project Fellows from Niger, the guide includes prompts to support exploration of the content and application to the local context, tips to support educators as they make space and time for professional learning, and advice regarding online, and other technological, aspects of the training.

II. **[Introduction to Asset Based Pedagogies in Displacement Contexts Workshops Facilitation Guide](#)**

This manual is intended to support the delivery of one full-day workshop on the topic of supporting QHL in crisis contexts through the implementation of asset-based pedagogical tools and activities and through sustaining safe and secure learning spaces.

III. **[Differentiated Instruction in Displacement Contexts Workshops Facilitation Guide](#)**

This manual is intended to support the delivery of two full-day workshops on the topic of supporting QHL in crisis contexts through the implementation of differentiated instruction tools and activities and through sustaining safe and secure learning spaces.

QHL Micro-Credentials

Micro-credentials from Digital Promise are competency-based certifications that validate specific skills and knowledge in teaching and education. These credentials benefit teachers by offering personalized professional development opportunities, allowing them to demonstrate mastery of new skills at their own pace through practical, job-embedded tasks. This approach supports career advancement, prompts reflection, and ensures continuous improvement in teaching practices. CPL at Childhood Education International currently offers three microcredentials related to quality holistic learning:

- I. [Asset-Based Pedagogies for Quality Holistic Learning](#)
- II. [Differentiated Instruction for Quality Holistic Learning in Displacement Settings](#)
- III. [Social and Emotional Learning & Psychosocial Support for Quality Holistic Learning](#)

QHL Guidance Notes and Reports


- I. [Guidance Note for Establishing and Sustaining \(Virtual\) Communities of Practice in Displacement Contexts](#)
Using the QHL Project as a model, this guidance note provides recommendations, observations, and practical tips from community members, establishing an overview of the path to creating a virtual CoP for educators.
- II. [Digital Teacher Professional Development in Education in Displacement \(EiD\) Settings: Access, equity, and quality](#)
This report provides an overview of existing digital teacher professional development resources for teachers working in displacement contexts. The report focuses on the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Other OERs

Most of the resources outlined above are available in English, French, and Arabic. In addition, a [Handbook for Quality Holistic Learning in Kenya](#) was developed by the QHL Project Fellows hailing from that country, which has also been translated into [Kiswahili](#). In addition to the resources developed by the QHL team, the OER library also features several resources in both Ukrainian and Spanish. The CPL team looks forward to expanding the offerings in the OER library to continue benefiting educators around the world looking for robust and easily accessible professional development.

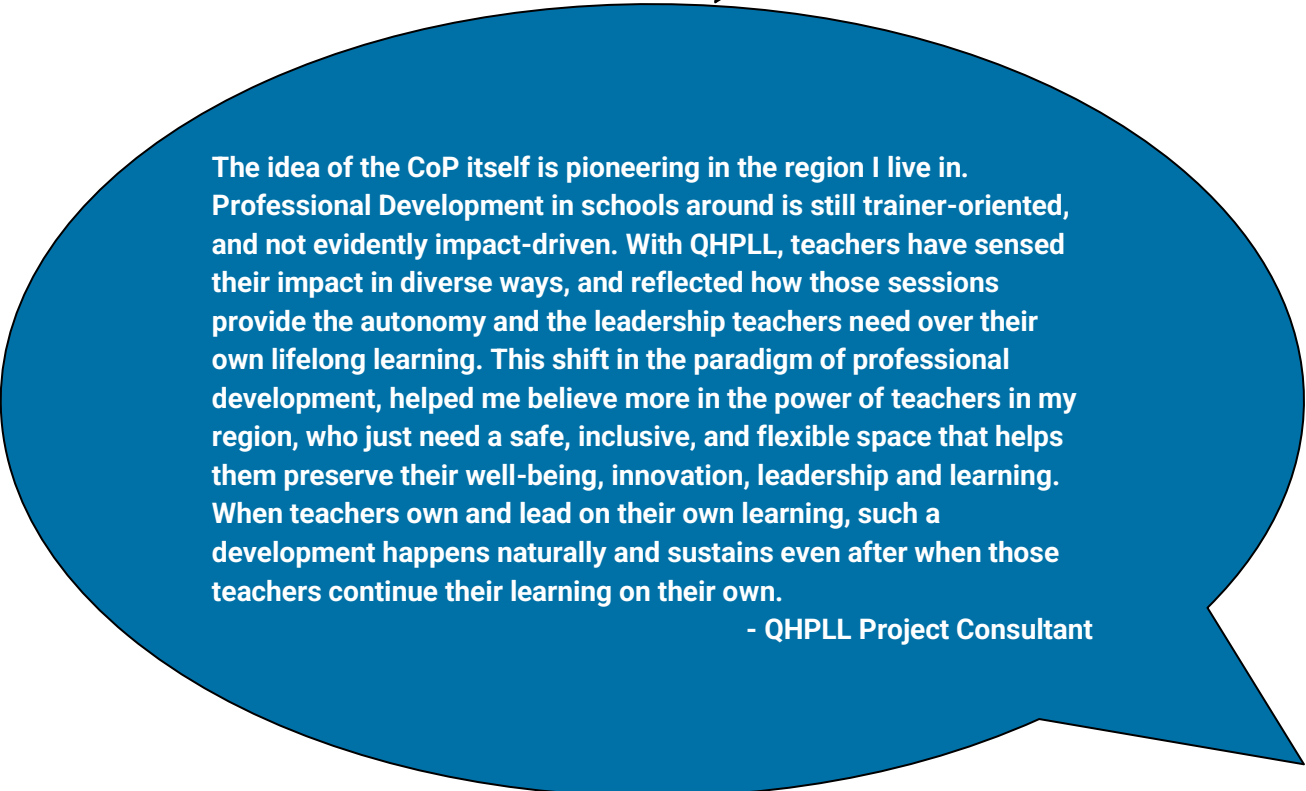
Educator Communities of Practice in Lebanon

In this section, we aim to capture processes utilized and share learnings taken from ongoing Community of Practice (CoP) formation and activity across Lebanon's governorates initiated as part of the QHPLL project. CoPs were formed by QHPLL Project Fellows and Consultants, with their local colleagues and organizations, between December and July 2024. In some schools, networks, or regions, plans were made for continued CoP activity in the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. Each CoP that has taken shape in Lebanon is contextualized and specific to the community members it serves, with great variation across regions, school types, and CoP structures and goals. Despite the different approaches used to create and sustain the CoPs, each CoP takes a **teacher-centered approach** and centers **reflective practices and dialogue about holistic learning** in their structure and work. Throughout this document, we share experiences, insights, and resources from the QHPLL CoPs.



The real transformation began when we started to think beyond the confines of traditional professional development. Inspired by the concept of Communities of Practice, we aimed to create spaces where teachers could connect on a more personal level, share their experiences, and collaborate on finding solutions to their challenges.

- QHPLL Project Fellow



The idea of the CoP itself is pioneering in the region I live in. Professional Development in schools around is still trainer-oriented, and not evidently impact-driven. With QHPLL, teachers have sensed their impact in diverse ways, and reflected how those sessions provide the autonomy and the leadership teachers need over their own lifelong learning. This shift in the paradigm of professional development, helped me believe more in the power of teachers in my region, who just need a safe, inclusive, and flexible space that helps them preserve their well-being, innovation, leadership and learning. When teachers own and lead on their own learning, such a development happens naturally and sustains even after when those teachers continue their learning on their own.

- QHPLL Project Consultant

What Are CoPs and Why Do They Matter in Lebanon and for Quality Holistic Professional Learning?

CoPs provide space for people to connect and organize their learning and reflections around purposeful actions. They are social learning spaces that provide collaborative opportunities and create shared contexts to disseminate (and evaluate) existing knowledge bases and resources, while also generating new knowledge and resources. People come together to form CoPs because of their desire to expand their knowledge (and skills) on a specific matter collectively, grow their professional practice, and learn from others. Because of their power to encourage collaboration, collective inquiry, and action, CoPs can serve as an effective form of professional development for teachers (DuFour et al, 2008). To learn more about CoPs, from leaders in the field of social learning, visit Wegner-Trayner's [Introduction to Communities of Practice](#) website.

Teachers in Lebanon, across all sectors, need more community spaces that allow them to engage and grow professionally. Teachers across Lebanon have shared their willingness and need to attend professional development opportunities to enhance their professional growth and enrich their classroom practice. Unfortunately, many of these opportunities start and end with a training. There are few, if any, follow-ups that take place to offer opportunities for reflection on implementation and impact. Teachers are often eager to try new approaches after a training, but they frequently feel that they are alone in what they are doing. Across schools and regions, teachers lack spaces for dialogue, exploration of shared practice, collaboration, and innovation. Teachers in Lebanon are also under tremendous stress and need peer support and collegial spaces to cultivate and sustain their well-being. Many teachers feel a need to gather with colleagues to build their knowledge, skills, and capacity to continue addressing the challenges they are facing as they engage in new pedagogical practices and in very difficult times. Social learning spaces, such as educator-formed and educator-led CoPs, are an important addition to the professional learning landscape in Lebanon.

Reflective Practices and Sustainable Learning in CoPs

At the heart of many CoPs is reflective practice and dialogue. Reflection, both individual and shared, is widely recognized as an important activity for teachers, as it enhances their professional growth and instructional effectiveness (Brookfield, 1995). Unfortunately, Drago-Severson (2004), among other researchers, found that “most teachers construct knowledge from their experience, often sharing this private knowledge with no one.” As teachers engage in teaching and learning processes in their classrooms, they are not only delivering planned lessons but also constantly engaging in reflection on their teaching and students' learning. The creation of **CoP learning spaces** that allow teachers to engage in professional dialogue and share stories of teaching and learning is essential. Teachers, together with their colleagues, need to engage in reflective conversations that allow them to critically and intentionally reflect on their beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, convictions, practices, pedagogical moves, curriculum, impact, and outcomes. Such conversations can happen both formally and informally, in learning spaces both in school and outside of it, such as CoPs. To transform the narrative of learning, we must redefine the roles of both students and teachers.

Reflective practices in teacher-led CoP learning spaces can take different forms.

The list below has been inspired by Drago-Severson's (2004) reflective practices, as well as Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmind (2006), Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) and Gibbs reflective cycle (1988), in alignment with the CoP work that has been ongoing in Lebanon.

- Knowledge creation and sharing
- Collaborative goal setting
- Public discussion
- Private discussion
- Reflective observations and feedback
- Self-questioning
- Reflection in action and on action
- Conversations with colleagues and students
- Experimentation with new practices
- Conflict resolution and evaluation

These practices are aligned with Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory and backed by research. As teachers engage in reflective practices, they construct knowledge while considering their own classroom experiences (and that of peers if conducted in a social learning space, like a CoP). They build self-efficacy, explore new pedagogical models, construct teacher leadership or collaborative innovator identities, and plan for future actions. They become agents of change, in their own classrooms and in their broader teaching and learning ecosystems; thus, they create sustainable learning (Woolis, 2024) opportunities for themselves and their peers, as autonomous lifelong learners.

Forming CoPs in Lebanon: Resources and Lessons Learned

Each stage of CoP formation is collaborative. Decision-making, planning, and creating are done with the participation, talent, and insights of every member of the community. CoPs draw upon frameworks of participatory design and collective action, as aligned with adult learning principles and theorizations of sustainable learning, reflective practice, and transformative learning.

The initiation of conversations regarding CoPs across Lebanon took different shapes. An initial conversation at the internal QHPLL Project Team level resulted in the formation of different CoPs internally to reflect team members' diverse needs, regional variations, and requests for support as Project Fellows engaged in outreach in local communities and regions. Project Fellows (themselves emerging teacher



leaders new to CoPs) recognized the necessity for collective engagement and reflection on their practices, breakthroughs, and challenges as they worked with local colleagues to establish CoPs.

On a broader scale, the QHPLL Project Team kept hearing of the need among their colleagues for space to engage in supportive and facilitated dialogue to collectively address challenges they were facing and to develop effective classroom practices that lead to positive holistic learning outcomes for each of their students. As a result, CoPs began forming in pockets across Lebanon's governorates, including the formation of unique CoPs focused on quality holistic learning in private schools and across NGO programs serving Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Each of the newly formed CoPs targets the needs of the participants of the community as they look to improve their pedagogical practice, connect with other educators, improve outcomes for learners, and share resources with each other.

Guidelines and Steps for Establishing CoPs¹

- I. **Connect people:** CoPs are all about connection! QHPLL Project Fellows and Consultants used a variety of outreach strategies to connect with organizations, institutions, schools, and individuals in specific communities across Lebanon's governorates. Project Fellows and consultants mapped their regions and identified organizations, schools, or teacher groups that might benefit from QHPLL resources and might be interested in forming partnerships to co-create local, contextualized CoPs that support professional learning, connection and well-being, and implementation of holistic learning pedagogies. Outreach included public, private, semi-private, NGO, and nonformal learning communities. Any teacher was welcome to join face-to-face or online CoPs to engage in social learning and collective action.



In Lebanon, the outreach process posed challenges as it introduced a new idea - that of CoPs and quality holistic professional learning - to schools and educators. Concurrently, teachers were heavily involved in planning how to address learning gaps from the previous years, resulting in packed schedules. Moreover, economic challenges impeded teachers' commitment and the onset of war in Gaza in October and the escalation in South Lebanon during the same month further diverted teachers' attention and resources. Nonetheless, despite these obstacles, educators found ways to connect and establish communities, which is discussed further below and throughout this document.

- II. **Help people organize around purposeful actions:** In a CoP, all agree on the purpose of the community and on shared actions they wish to take. In many of the QHPLL CoPs, educators share commitments to growing professionally and sustaining autonomous lifelong learning.

¹ Learn more at: [Guidelines-for-Establishing-COP.pdf \(notredame.edu.au\)](https://notredame.edu.au/Guidelines-for-Establishing-COP.pdf).



In Lebanon, many educators and teachers expressed enthusiasm about participating in the QHPLL Project and in related CoPs. They actively participated in various stages, with teachers notably collaborating with the QHPLL Project Fellows to co-plan their CoP's objectives, reflect on their needs, and engage in CoP activities to enhance their pedagogical practice and implementation of social and emotional learning, differentiated instruction, asset-based pedagogies, and much more.

- III. **Introduce collaborative processes:** Collaboration is at the heart of CoPs. Initially, QHPLL Project Fellows and Consultants used reflective practices and open dialogue to generate ideas for the CoPs and to cultivate a collaborative spirit. This was followed by the co-creation of a CoP charter (more on this later in this document) to co-define the purpose of the CoP and co-design the activities, timelines, and other protocols of the CoP.



The development of differentiated, contextualized, and unique CoP charters and cycles (which will be introduced later in the document) was a collaborative process for each CoP established in Lebanon. From this co-creative start, CoP members co-developed their next steps and ways forward, including (in some cases) toward sustainable futures together.

- IV. **Provide a shared context:** In a CoP, the shared context can be anything that draws members of that community together. For the QHPLL CoPs, the focus was on sharing of QHL OERs (as described earlier) and shifts in classroom practice toward more learner-centered, SEL-integrated, and holistic approaches. The QHL OERs available in Arabic, English, and French offered a shared context to meet, talk about classroom practice, and identify common challenges and set goals to improve pedagogical approaches to better meet the needs of diverse learners across Lebanon and their teachers. The resources and the **CoP learning spaces** are led and co-created *by teachers for teachers*.

This process is detailed in the shared experiences section of this document.

- V. **Capture and disseminate existing knowledge:** CoPs serve as a **social learning space** that allows educators (or other practitioners) to gather and share information, resources, experiences, and insights. QHPLL CoPs met both in-person and virtually to do this knowledge work. Within local communities across Lebanon, different approaches were taken for knowledge sharing. Online, the Mighty Networks digital platform served as a means of building upon teachers' assets and experiences in virtual, social learning spaces nationwide, differentiated by language (Arabic, English, or French).



QHPLL CoPs faced several challenges using the Mighty Networks platform. Online engagement of teachers was low, perhaps because this was a new digital platform in Lebanon or perhaps because participants preferred localized and face-to-face meetings, rather than virtual, nationwide CoP engagement. Project Fellows tried several approaches to increase participation and knowledge sharing through the platform. They shared content similar to that used in workshops and local CoP (in-person) learning spaces. Project Fellows also showcased the work of QHPLL CoP participants, giving them credit for their contributions and recognition for their ongoing professional development.

- VI. **Generate new knowledge:** CoPs are valuable not only for sharing existing bodies of knowledge (and resources), but also for production of new knowledge and resources. This is true of the QHPLL CoPs as well, which proved to be generative spaces for thinking about integration of SEL, differentiated instruction, asset-based pedagogies, and teacher leadership.



In Lebanon, this was best observed through the feedback provided by teachers as they engaged in CoPs and shared insights and resources they generated as they worked to implement learned and acquired pedagogies.

Guiding Questions for Each Step of CoP Formation Within a CoP Cycle:

I. **Connect people:**

- A. Who are the educators and practitioners that make up our CoP?
- B. Who are the key partners (schools, I/NGOs, institutions, etc.) that need to be invited to be part of the CoPs?
- C. What criteria help us identify key partners for our CoPs?
- D. What are the steps that need to be followed in the strategic outreach process?



II. **Help people organize around purposeful actions:**

- A. **(Purpose)** What common purpose drives the creation of this CoP? For example: boosting SEL implementation knowledge and skills or cultivating teacher leadership skills.
- B. **(Needs)** What are our individual needs? How do these needs differ, or intersect?
- C. **(Goals)** What common goals will we set together to give meaning and direction to this group?
- D. **(Action)** What actions need to be taken together to address our common needs and challenges?
- E. **(Evaluation)** When can success be measured in the CoP?

III. Introduce collaborative processes:

- A. What are each member's assets? How can the community build on each person's assets to create a collaborative structure?
- B. What practices and activities will be integrated to ensure collaboration in the CoP?
- C. What strategies will create space for reflective practices, knowledge sharing, action planning, etc.?

IV. Provide a shared context:

- A. How is the CoP connected to the educational context of the members?
- B. What are the identified challenge/s all members of the CoP face?
- C. What are the identified goal/s everyone is working on? What connects the community together?
- D. How does the community ensure focus on their common goal and reflect on their professional growth?
- E. How can the CoP be sustained for continued growth?

V. Capture and disseminate existing knowledge:

- A. What content and knowledge are best to gather and share for the CoP that will support members in co-creating solutions to top challenges?
- B. What kinds of activities will be integrated to share practitioners' knowledge, ideas, insights, reflections, etc. within the CoP?
- C. How and where will the knowledge and reflections be tracked and shared? What platforms or systems will be used to do that?
- D. How are we going to archive our reflections and learnings?

VI. Generate new knowledge:

- A. **Reflection** on CoP members' efforts and collaborative work:
 - How did planned implementation solutions or shared initiatives go?
 - What worked and didn't work well?
 - Are there new challenges that need to be addressed?
- B. **Knowledge:**
 - What new knowledge has been gained after implementation tests, experiments, and studies?
 - What was learned from reflection on experiences?
 - What do we know now that we didn't know before?
 - How are we continually learning (and unlearning) in our work?
- C. **Goals:**
 - Are set goals met? If yes, how? If not, why not?
 - What learnings can be shared now that the community has met (or has failed to meet) its goals?
 - Are there sub-goals, or related goals as part of the iterative learning cycle?
- D. **Evaluation:**
 - What is the individual and collective evaluation of the community's experience(s)?
 - What evidence supports the knowledge claims that the community is making?
 - How are data and feedback being collected, both qualitatively and quantitatively?
 - How are the data being analyzed and progress being evaluated and reported?

Charter Template Used for the Formation of QHPLL CoPs

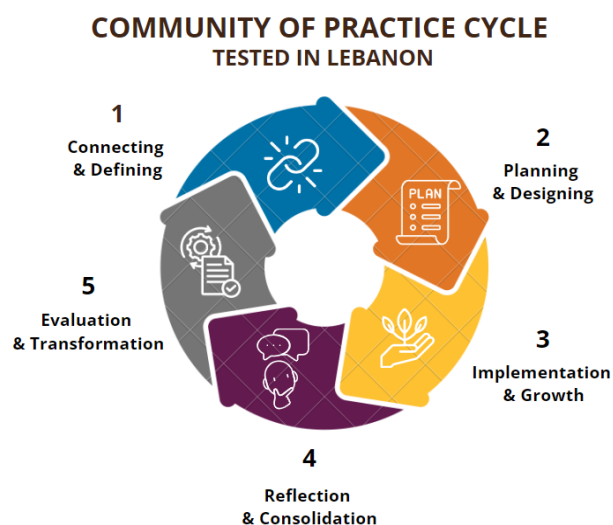
CoP Charter:	
CoP Name:	
CoP Slogan:	
Purpose and Domain	
What is the scope (title of interests) of our CoP?	
Why did we choose to create this CoP? <i>Reflect on the needs and challenges you want your community to tackle.</i>	
What are the goals for our CoP?	
What are the benefits of the goals for stakeholders and members of the CoP?	
Members and Membership	
Which members possess the qualifications to join the CoP? <i>Members who are joining need to have an aligned purpose with the community.</i>	
What are the selection criteria for members? Or will it be kept open?	
How will we recruit and attract new members?	
How can each member help, and what added value can they bring?	
Community Organization (Roles, Responsibilities, Decision-Making)	
What are the specific roles within the CoP, and what are their clear descriptions?	
Who will be assigned these roles, and how will we nominate and assign responsibilities?	
How will we manage communication between members?	
How will we assign and manage tasks related to internal organization, administration, logistics, field-related activities, etc.? <i>Reflect on the community's requirements and identify the internal roles necessary to oversee those needs and tasks. These are not just limited to the ones mentioned in the question, as they are intended to direct your thinking.</i>	
How will we allocate responsibilities based on the expertise of each member?	
What are the criteria for making final decisions, and who will make these decisions?	
Will responsibilities be flexible or static, and do roles change after a period of time?	

Behaviors	
What are the desired behaviors that serve the CoP?	
How will we plan, generate, and agree upon a code of conduct (e.g., drafting, brainstorming, voting)?	
How will we ensure the sustainability of desired behaviors?	
Practices	
Content	
What kinds of activities will the CoP have, and how often should they be repeated?	
How will knowledge be generated and experiences captured to serve as a reflective learning tool?	
What is the strategy for implementing the scheduled content and activities (plan of action), and how are they monitored and recorded?	
How will the activities planned by the CoP be facilitated? And by whom?	
Resources	
What body of knowledge will be utilized and in what modalities?	
What resources and materials are needed for the CoP?	
Who will support the CoP?	
Meeting Place	
What modality will best serve the CoP (e.g., face-to-face, online platform)?	
What platform will be used for meetings?	
How will meetings be organized to optimize participation and outcomes?	
Measure of Outcomes	
How is the documentation of reporting conducted, and to whom is the community reporting?	
How will you measure success or failure?	
How would you assess the ongoing process in the CoP?	
References: Wenger (1998); Cambridge, Kaplan, & Suter (2005); Cambridge, Kaplan, & Suter (2005); Smith (2003); Bielaczyc & Collins (1999); Bielaczyc & Collins (1999)	

CoP Cycle

The QHPLL Project Team considered (and tested) various structures within and across their CoPs. Ultimately, they agreed upon the following **5 cyclical steps for CoP formation and sustainability in Lebanon**:

1. Connecting and Defining
2. Planning and Designing
3. Implementation and Growth
4. Reflection and Consolidation
5. Evaluation and Transformation



The table below shares some of the ways teachers worked in CoPs during the QHPLL project period. Note: It is not a linear process, but rather is a cycle as illustrated above, with teachers moving back and forth between the different stages as needed.

Connecting and Defining	Planning and Designing	Implementation and Growth	Reflection and Consolidation	Evaluation and Transformation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting to know each other. 2. Selecting the priority(ies) of the CoP. 3. Identifying main challenges or topics that will be explored in the CoP. 4. Proposing activities for the CoP that may lead to new ideas and/or solutions to problems. 5. Suggesting possible activities and actions that can be taken as a CoP. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choosing activities and actions that will be tried out during the CoP implementation period. 2. Designing and identifying the resources that will be used during the period (such as the QHL OER Library, for example). 3. Planning the kind of follow-up and the mode that will be used (Mighty Networks, Whatsapp, brief brainstorming sessions). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging in community activities and their own implementation activities and solutions. 2. Sharing resources, attending each other's classrooms, dialoguing, and engaging with each other and each other's work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coming together to share efforts, data, resources, outcomes, and questions. 2. Engaging in reflection and dialogue. <p><i>At this stage, teachers will explore what worked and what didn't work and why. They'll provide feedback to each other and share insights so they can further test implementation of new approaches and tools in their classrooms as they expand their work.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate changes in their teaching practice and impact on students' learning. 2. Capture transformative practices, new resources, and other learning to disseminate globally at their school or organization. <p><i>Success stories and lessons learned can be captured at this stage.</i></p>

The CoP Cycle in Action: Steps Taken to Form QHPLL CoPs in Lebanon's 8 governorates

- Reaching out to schools/organizations/individuals
- Introducing the OER Library and QHL approaches for students and teachers (creating the common ground) in open knowledge-sharing events
- Leading local interactive workshops for educators focused on a specific domain addressing their needs within the QHL OERs (SEL, differentiated instruction, or asset-based pedagogies)
- Exploring the resources that allow for knowledge exploration
- Inquiring about the community needs and challenges and utilizing the available resources to meet the cause
- Coming together as colleagues in social learning spaces, for the first time, to reflect on the formation of a CoP and to co-develop a CoP charter (which includes the following sections: purpose, domain, membership, community organizations, behaviors and practice)
- Choosing the CoP learning space meeting modality (coffee shop, classroom, community center, virtual, online platforms, etc.)
- Co-creating professional learning plans that include numerous next steps, including, in some cases, setting a certain task to accomplish (such as trying out a new approach or completing an online course) that could be discussed at the next CoP gathering
- Co-creating an agenda for each subsequent CoP learning space convening (whether formal meeting or informal meeting)
- Going back to the cycle for engagement in revising, evaluating, and assessing the work within the CoP

QHPLL CoP Shared Practices

As noted earlier, reflective practices and sustainable learning are central to CoPs and this has been true of the CoPs that have formed in Lebanon. There are four related practices, discussed below, that have been used consistently across the QHPLL CoPs in Lebanon: collaborative goal setting, public discussion, private discussion, and co-creation of criteria of success.

- **Collaborative goal setting** through the use of the [CoP Charter](#) has been a consistent practice in QHPLL CoPs. Co-creation of a CoP charter allows members of emerging CoPs to think together about the purpose of their CoP, the different domains of the CoP, membership, and roles.
 - The development of a CoP charter is ongoing work. This means that the community uses the charter as a way to anchor their work and thinking, guiding them toward their shared goals. CoP members regularly return to the charter as they reflect on their growth of knowledge and experience as a result of their interactions in the CoP. The charter allows them to rethink and reflect on their agreements to see if adjustments need to be made. The flexibility of the CoP charter allows the CoP to capture their transformative learning together as they find (and make) meaning in their shared work.

- **Public discussion** on the Mighty Networks digital platform has been another core practice of QHPLL CoPs and serves as a uniting force (and space) amongst the varied, regional, and localized CoPs. Four months after the start of the project, different channels on the Mighty Networks platform were opened to educators across Lebanon for the sharing and exchange of ideas. It has also been used as a space to engage in specific activities led by a member of the QHPLL project team. These spaces have been created to welcome the multilingual community that is Lebanon and are thus offered in Arabic, English, and French.
 - [Arabic](#)
 - [English](#)
 - [French](#)

- **Private discussion** among members, through both face-to-face and online meetings, has been an important part of CoP practice, as well. These meetings have been structured around intentional and purposeful activities that will engage everyone collectively. Unstructured formats have also been followed to allow CoP participants to share their ideas and engage in professional dialogue freely. These conversations have often been guided by CoP members directly, rather than being guided by a QHPLL project team member. This has cultivated members' leadership skills, increased their confidence to co-create peer-to-peer and social learning opportunities, and has given CoP members a sense of ownership over the work and belonging in the community. Collectively, this promotes sustainable learning within each CoP.

- **Co-creation of criteria for success** (in the implementation of new learning and pedagogical practice) has allowed teachers participating in CoPs to come together to share their efforts to implement holistic learning pedagogies and discuss any results and/or observations they have. During this time, teachers have engaged in reflection and dialogue as they share their observations and results (these can include notes, lesson plans, student work, etc.). Collectively, teachers identify what has worked and what hasn't worked and why. Collaboratively, they create measures, or criteria, for successful implementation of holistic learning pedagogies. By offering each other feedback, they gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to try again or to try something in a new way, thus supporting application of new learning from their professional development work and collegial conversations.

CoP Structures and Activities

CoPs in Lebanon have been marked by both formal and informal structures and activities.

Formal CoP structures tested during the QHPLL Project:

- These sessions took place on school premises or over Zoom and were organized by a project, school, or program leader.
- These sessions were structured by the use of an agenda (co-created by the leading QHPLL Project Fellow and their community members).
- Pre and post-surveys or polls were used to assess the success of the session and to plan for needs to be taken into consideration at the next meeting/stage.

Informal CoP session structures tested during the QHPLL Project:

- Teachers came together voluntarily to share their work or brainstorm ideas.
- These sessions happened in a variety of spaces, including coffee shops, outdoor spaces, and community centers.
- Sessions were not always led by a QHPLL Project Fellow or Consultant. Groups of two or more teachers came together to discuss and share.
- Learning spaces were also impromptu and casual, allowing for social dialogue alongside professional dialogue.

A variety of activities were used for community building, reflective practice, structured dialogue, well-being, and much more. This table describes some, but certainly not all, of the activities tested in, adapted for, and contextualized to different communities during the QHPLL Project.

The table below contains the following categories:

1. SEL, Well-being, & Self-Care
2. Ice-breakers & Connectors
3. Collaborative Learning
4. Visible Thinking & Active Listening
5. Online Interactivity

Activity	Description
Objective(s): SEL, Well-being, & Self-Care	
My Teacher Wellbeing Wheel – developed by WISE	This SEL well-being tool can be used to help teachers and educators identify the five categories of well-being. This can open the conversation to teachers regarding how to reflect on their well-being and to make effective changes.
5 Minutes of Self Care	To make sure that everyone has a moment for self-care, you can ask participants to choose one item from this list and have them do it in the allotted time, or have them do it after their meeting and report back.
Describe Your Feeling	Participants look at the adjectives provided in the slideshow and assess how they are feeling based on the visuals/descriptions.
Stressful Thought Eliminator	Participant(s) enter a stressful thought into the webpage and watch it disappear.
Tree House Meditation	This is a simple meditation that can be done in 5 minutes.
Objective(s): Ice Breakers & Connectors	
Our Salad	Together we are making a salad. As we go around the circle, we will name one thing we will grow in our garden to put in the salad. We will do three rounds of this, trying to not repeat ingredients.
Three Wishes Activity with modification suggestions	Engage participants to say three wishes for the work in progress or the work ahead (e.g., “What are three things that you are wishing for in this project?”). Answers can be open-ended.

I Used to Think... Now I Think...	In this activity, participants share an idea that they previously held and comment on how it has changed. This activity can be used as a reflection during the middle or end of a project period.
QHPLL Bingo Board	This activity can be done virtually or in person. The objective is to have participants find people who have done the things listed on the Bingo board or who fit the characteristics listed on the Bingo board. The overall goal is to get Bingo (5 across, down, or diagonal) and to learn something about the other participants. The criteria on the board can change for your audience. Make a copy of the template to edit and make it your own.
Emoji Stories	Participants can use emojis to describe their day, week, etc.
Composition Tool	This is a tool to compose music. Participants can use it to write their own compositions or just experiment, have fun, and destress.
Salt and Pepper	The aim of this activity is to allow participants to interact with each other by asking questions.
Community/Team/Class Playlist	The community builds a collaborative playlist on Spotify or on another platform.
Collaborative Learning	
Think - Pair - Square - Share	This strategy helps learners share their thinking and ideas together. It starts with individual thinking, then sharing and discussing such thinking in pairs. Finally, a group of 4 participants is formed in which 2 pairs discuss their shared ideas all together. They then present their collective thinking to the whole community. The activity can serve many purposes: brainstorming, analyzing a given prompt, reviewing, reflecting, etc.
Station Rotation (Adapted)	This strategy helps learners not only give individual input, but also build on other input through writing/drawing. The learning space has a number of stations, with each station having the same prompt. Learners are divided into groups, each group per station. The group members take turns to write input, and with a facilitator's sign, they switch. Once done with their first stations, each group then rotates to the other stations to build on/reflect/highlight existing input.
Visible Thinking & Active Listening	
3-2-1 Bridge	This tool can be used to help participants reflect on their thoughts before and after a learning experience.
See-Think -Wonder from Harvard.edu	This routine encourages participants to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.
Think-Puzzle-Explore from Harvard.edu	This routine activates prior knowledge, generates ideas and curiosity, and prepares for deeper inquiry.
See - Think - Wonder Wheel from Harvard.edu	This routine encourages learners to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.

Repair Party	Use this activity to encourage group members to think about how and why they want to repair something damaged or deficient. It encourages them to talk about why they want to repair it. Some sample questions that may guide discussion are: 1. Can you find beauty in this image? 2. Can you find truth in this image? 3. How might beauty reveal truth? 4. How might beauty conceal truth?
MicroLabs Protocols: https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/	Microlabs address a specific sequence of questions in a structured format with small groups, using active listening skills. Use this tool to create a space in which everyone can listen carefully while giving space for the speaker to express themselves fully before allowing for input.
Ladder of feedback from Harvard.edu	The ladder of feedback consists of four steps that allow both the giver and receiver to engage in an effective process of listening and giving feedback.
5 Why's Root Cause Analysis	The 5 Why's is a simple root cause analysis tool that helps identify the underlying reason for a problem by repeatedly asking "Why?" until the root cause is found. This technique encourages deeper understanding and effective problem-solving, making it valuable for addressing issues in community practices.
Online Interactivity	
Padlet Intros Our community Padlet	Padlets are a great way to build community through self-introductions. They are also very good for resource sharing, language learning, and other interactive activities. One can use Padlets to build community, collaborate, and share knowledge.
Slido	Use Slido to create a space for questions and answers and polling to get an easy overview of participants' thoughts and opinions.

Impact of CoPs in Lebanon: Stories and Experiences

As fellow teachers and their colleagues engaged in co-creating CoPs and participated in reflective dialogues, they learned to deeply reflect on their experiences through these collaborative discussions. The shared learning and insights from these interactions are captured below. These stories and experiences have fundamentally reshaped our understanding of community needs, highlighting the essential role of social learning spaces like CoPs in creating effective learning communities.

The experiences and reflections shared by QHPLL Project Fellows demonstrate the profound impact of engaging teachers in the co-creation of CoPs. These collaborative spaces have transformed traditional professional development by fostering a sense of ownership, inclusion, and continuous improvement among educators. Teachers have gained the ability to analyze and solve problems critically, feel empowered to take initiative, and developed leadership skills that benefit both themselves and their students. This shift has not only enhanced teacher development but also positively influenced student outcomes, underscoring the importance of CoPs in creating effective and sustainable learning communities.

Reflections and Feedback from Participant Teachers on CoP Sessions:

I believe if all workshops we attend have this aspect of teacher leadership, we wouldn't want to miss any. As a long life learner, this space keeps me motivated to attend every session of this CoP as I feel free, supported, and valued. - Science teacher from South Lebanon in a CoP session

Never have we ever had the chance to come together, us as teachers, to discuss what we are doing in our classrooms, and if what we are doing is working well or not. This is the first time we discuss our challenges, and I am happy to hear from my colleagues and to have my voice heard as well. - Grade 8, Biology Teacher in a SEL CoP session

في مجتمع الممارسة، شعرت كمعلمة أنني خرة بتطوري المهني ولكن مسؤولية عنه بنفس الوقت. لم أشعر بهذه المرونة المهنية في أي تدريب حضرته من قبل.

معلمة لغة عربية من البقاع

Les discussions ont été riches et constructives, abordant des thèmes variés allant des nouvelles approches pédagogiques aux défis rencontrés dans nos différents contextes éducatifs. Cette diversité de perspectives a été enrichissante et a ouvert de nouvelles pistes de réflexion pour améliorer ma pratique professionnelle. - participant à la communauté de pratique

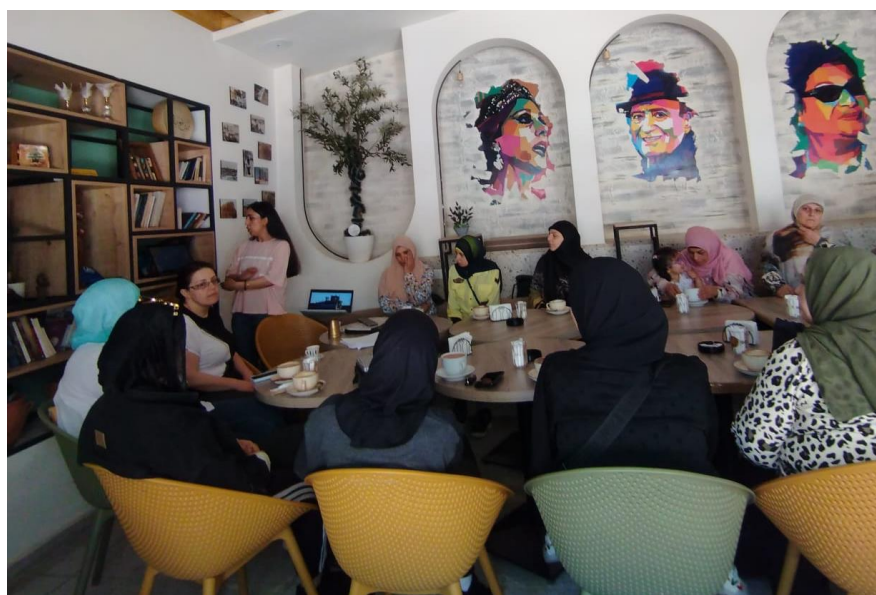
What I really like about a community of practice, is the feeling that I am heard, valued and appreciated. You just facilitate our growth and improvement, but we are the leaders now. I experienced this for the first time, as this is not the case in the workshops we attend to. - Arabic Language Teacher in a CoP focused on differentiated instruction

Challenges to be considered and planned for in forming CoPs in Lebanon, based on QHPLL Project Leads' experiences:

- Lack of or low motivation among teachers related to their professional growth, given persistent stressors and challenges in the country and in schools
- Fixed mindset among formal education leaders about what constitutes teachers' professional development
- Limited time, professionally and personally, for additional projects or activities
- Limitations around direct means of engaging with or contacting teachers
- Limited support provided from education leaders for teachers' professional development
- Principals' and administrators' authoritative leadership hinders teachers from having space to take responsibility to move CoPs forward
- Costs associated with leading CoP workshops or gatherings and limited sources of funding for teacher-led or peer-to-peer learning engagements
- Uncertainty and lack of clarity around CoP purpose and vision in new contexts
- Lack of teachers' commitment to and continuity in their professional development

Support, resources, and successes identified, amplified, and/or leveraged to support the formation of CoPs across Lebanon:

- Teachers' initiative and willingness to assemble and contribute to formation of CoPs
- Encouragement and support for professional development from school/organization leadership and/or management teams
- Positive environment and sense of belonging in school
- Resourceful spaces (for gatherings, to work, etc.)
- Involvement of diverse members of the community
- OERs
- Financial support (micro-grants or donations to support workshops and gatherings)
- Teachers' well-being centered and preserved (financial, physical, etc.)
- Informal sessions attracted participants, creating opportunities to connect and share
- Involved teachers from various education sectors in a common space (public, private, semi-private, community-based, or I/NGO)
- Evidence of CoPs meeting teachers' and learners' needs



Main Takeaways for Building Effective CoPs

According to QHPLL Project Fellows, the following are critical considerations to develop a successful CoP in specific, differentiated settings across Lebanon.

1. **Contributions to Tackle Challenges:** Identify and address the specific challenges within a unique, shared, and local context.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly monitor, adjust, and refine CoP activities based on feedback and evolving needs.
3. **Well-Equipped CoP:** Ensure the CoP is well-resourced to support its members.
4. **Resource Utilization:** Leverage existing resources, including OERs and financial support to enhance CoP effectiveness.
5. **Motivated and Willing Teachers:** Foster a community of enthusiastic and committed educators.
6. **Common Ground for Support:** Provide a platform for teachers to support and help each other develop.
7. **Achieving Desired Goals:** Focus on reaching the set objectives.
8. **Sustainability:** Build for and work toward long-term viability of the CoP.
9. **Teacher Development Reflected in Student Outcomes:** Recognize that the professional growth of teachers should be evidenced by the success of their students. When teachers are aware of their learning process and actively engage in planning, their development positively impacts their students.
10. **Community Collaboration:** Promote collaboration among all community stakeholders, with inclusion as a key element. Emphasize the importance of involving parents in the CoP, where all members, including parents, play an integral role. Encourage inviting parents to volunteer in planning and activities related to their children, ensuring the sustainability of the CoP.

Key Components of an Effective CoP, according to the QHPLL Project Fellows:

1. **Inclusive Collaboration:** Engage all community stakeholders, including teachers, principals, and parents, to foster a supportive and collaborative environment.
2. **Individualized Professional Development:** Provide personalized development plans and diverse learning pathways for teachers to cater to their unique needs and career stages. Promote lifelong learning among the CoP members.
3. **Principal Engagement:** Ensure principals are knowledgeable about CoP concepts and actively spread and update these practices within their communities.
4. **Independent Operation:** Aim for CoPs to run independently, managed by teachers and administrators within the school.
5. **Leadership Development:** Build the leadership capacities of both principals and teachers.

Teacher Leadership in Lebanon

Defining Teacher Leadership in Lebanon: QHPLL Teacher Leaders' Perspective

The QHPLL Project Consultants and Project Fellows, a diverse group of educators from across the governorates and from public, semi-private, private, and nonformal or community-based and I/NGO schools, spent a few months thinking about teacher leadership —their own and that of their colleagues at their sites. They generated pages of ideas and then pulled the most salient and critical pieces together to form this definition of teacher leadership in the Lebanese context.

Teacher leadership is both a set of skills and a transformative process in which teachers take actions that positively impact their students, colleagues, institutions, and/or administrative authorities in order to work toward improved educational practices and policies, more inclusive and equitable learning environments, and positive learning and well-being outcomes.

Teacher leaders are confident in taking risks and standing up for decisions — supported by experience, expertise, and evidence — they believe will contribute to positive change within an education system.

There is no scale for these decisions, and as such, there are no trivial actions; they all matter and all can make a change. All teachers are leaders or have the potential to be leaders.

Teacher leaders keep learners at the center of their work, getting to know them at every possible opportunity and in multiple ways as holistic, complex, and co-creative people.

At the same time, teacher leaders prioritize their own professional development, acknowledging that lifetime learning is critical for growth.

The qualities of teacher leaders include but are not limited to integrity, empathy, commitment, effective communication skills, collaboration, courage, discernment, generosity, initiative, positivity, passion, problem-solving abilities, and a sense of responsibility.



Teacher Leadership in Lebanon: Background & Research Base

There's a growing recognition that addressing the increasingly complex issues at schools can no longer be managed solely by formal school leaders. In this light, there's broad consensus that teachers should be included with principals in finding new strategies to tackle these challenges (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Malas, 2019). Over the past four decades, numerous reform efforts and initiatives aimed at improving schools have emphasized the importance of teacher leadership and the need for teachers to collectively contribute to the growth, leadership, and decision-making processes of their schools (Harris & Huffman, 2017; Malas, 2019). However, this shift requires a fundamental change in how teachers view themselves as leaders, and schools must adapt their structures to support the growth of teacher leadership capabilities.

In the educational system of Lebanon, particularly in its public sector, school leadership remains authoritarian and predominantly top-down, reflecting the centralized nature of the education system it operates within (Akkary, 2013). Conversely, while the private sector offers more decentralized decision-making power to private schools, leadership roles are still predominantly held by principals, with a top-down approach (Berjaoui & Karami-Akkary; 2019; Karami-Akkary & Waheed; 2018).

Although teachers in the public sector may have limited opportunities to exercise their leadership, those in private schools might have more chances to lead, though these opportunities are often not recognized or utilized effectively. In his research, Maanna (2024) found that public school teachers in South Lebanon had less practice of their leadership compared to private school teachers. Moreover, according to Maanna (2024), private school teachers' perceptions and understanding of their leadership is often limited to their roles within the classroom, indicating a superficial view of their potential as leaders (Hammad et al., 2023). Given that Lebanese teachers often lack the knowledge or practice of leadership, and even teachers who are aware of leadership aspects may not apply them consistently, the actual state of teacher leadership in Lebanese educational contexts warrants attention (Ghamrawi, 2016; Maanna, 2024; Malas, 2019).

To foster teacher leadership within teaching communities, there needs to be a unified understanding of what teacher leadership is and what it entails among education professionals working in various Lebanese educational settings, whether it's public or private schools, NGOs, institutions, or other educational communities (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Ghamrawi, 2011). All stakeholders, including teachers, must fully grasp the concept of teacher leadership, including what is required for its cultivation, what challenges there may be in taking on a teacher leadership role, and in what forms this leadership can be practiced. Together, teachers could accordingly co-create sustainable systems that support the practice of teacher leadership in their contexts.

As teachers and education stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of teacher leadership, shaped by teachers' experiences at their schools, the roles they play, and the responsibilities they undertake, they contribute to a broader and more profound understanding among all educational stakeholders about the potential of teachers to lead. This, in turn, helps shift the paradigm of what defines and enables teacher leadership in Lebanon.

Impact Stories

Reflections on Micro-Credentials and Teacher Leadership

The micro-credentials provided through the QHPLL project have had a profound impact on both personal and professional development. Among the various courses, several stood out for their unique contributions to teaching practices and addressing the needs of students in challenging circumstances.

1. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Psychological Support:**

“This micro-credential was so important to me because it emphasized the necessity of addressing students' emotional and psychological needs, especially those who have experienced trauma due to conflict and displacement. Despite my long experience, I've learned many new activities and strategies I hadn't recognized before, all aimed at creating a safe classroom where students feel valued and understood.” - Elementary school science teacher

2. **Differentiated Instruction in Displacement Settings:**

“This course was particularly significant because it taught me how to tailor my lessons to ensure that all students, regardless of circumstances, can access the curriculum and achieve their full potential. I think every teacher should consider this micro-credential because this generation of students is unlike any before. They are unique due to their diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and personal experiences.” - Elementary school science teacher

Experiences of Becoming Teacher Leaders (From Project Fellows)

As QHPLL Project Fellows and their colleagues engaged in co-creating CoPs and participated in conversation about their continuous learning, they learned to deeply reflect upon their experiences as they emerged as teacher leaders. The shared learning and insights from these interactions are captured in themes below. These stories and experiences have fundamentally reshaped our understanding of teacher leadership as an agent, or means, of individual and collective professional development.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- Jihad: “Critical thinking. Everything I face now, I can analyze the problem or how to solve it.... This strategy in thinking, I think I get it from the experience in this group, this opportunity.”

Holistic Learning

- Israa: “I learned how to achieve holistic quality learning as a teacher in my class and as a facilitator without feeling stress on how to do it.”

Changing Perspectives on Professional Development

- Mirna: “We used to do workshops because principals were forcing us to do it. With our program, I think about ‘What do I need really?’ This is so new to me that it changed my way of thinking.”

Belief and Empowerment

- Yanal: “When I listen to other teachers, I listen and I learn.... They feel that their voices are heard, which is amazing.... I learned that believing is essential in any educational progress.... We are always there to learn and create. The first thing that comes to mind is that idea of belief. When someone believes in us. When we believe in our students, they can do it. It is a simple image and when I see it now, it is something beyond expectation.... I cannot forget that feeling of believing. When you believed in us, we did it, and when we believe in them, they can do it.”

Lifelong Learning and Curiosity

- Soha: “I understood the real meaning of holistic learning. Now I feel that I have a deep attention to the subjects that we work in. Being with all of you allows me to connect knowledge that I didn’t know before, but I can do the connection between all these subjects and learning. And now I have motivation for lifelong learning. The most important part for me: the curiosity to keep learning new things.”

Experiences of Becoming Teacher Leaders

- Israa: “Actually, I learned the art of facilitating even if I don’t have the expert knowledge. I felt the courage to interact, share, learn from and with the teachers who were having different levels in relation to the workshop.”

Impact Stories

These in-depth accounts illustrate QHPLL Teacher Leaders' growth throughout the project.

Yanal's Transformative Journey With QHL: From Participant to Leader

My journey with QHL began as a teacher participating in workshops, eventually evolving into a leadership role where I found myself not only training others but also fostering a vibrant community of practice (CoP). This progression profoundly impacted my experiences and relationships with fellow educators, guiding me toward a path of leadership. Initially, I was a participant in the QHL workshops, eager to learn and grow. These sessions were informative and provided valuable insights into teaching practices. I enjoyed these sessions, learning a lot from my colleagues and supervisors, striving for more engagement and impact.

The turning point came when I was invited to take on a leadership role within QHL. Transitioning from a participant to a leader was both exciting and daunting. I was now responsible for guiding my peers, sharing my knowledge, and facilitating their professional growth. This shift required me to develop new skills, including effective communication, empathy, and the ability to inspire and motivate others. The encouragement from my consultants, like Sara telling me, "You can rock, Yanal," and Julie's words, "You are a great leader," pushed me forward.



As I settled into my new role, I moved with high enthusiasm, eagerly anticipating feedback and reflections from others who began asking to be part of such communities. To truly succeed, I needed to create a space where teachers could freely express their thoughts and collaborate. Inspired by the concept of CoP, I began reshaping our professional development events. These new CoP events were informal, encouraging open dialogue and mutual support.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this journey has been the evolution of my relationships with fellow teachers, whether through traditional workshops or CoP events. These activities fostered a sense of community and trust. Teachers felt comfortable sharing their challenges and successes, and I found myself learning just as much from them as they did from me. This mutual exchange strengthened our bonds and created a supportive network. Many teachers felt confident asking me for solutions to issues they faced, thanks to the trust and belief built among us.

The transition was not without its challenges. Shifting from a structured, content-driven approach to a more fluid, discussion-based model required careful planning and facilitation. I had to ensure that every teacher felt valued and heard, which sometimes meant navigating difficult conversations and differing opinions. Ms. Iman once told me, “The most amazing thing in our meetings and trainings is that you hear our voice and listen to our real struggles and educational issues.” These challenges also provided opportunities for growth and deeper understanding.



As we moved forward, we achieved continuous improvement by regularly revisiting our CoP charter, ensuring that our principles of respect, openness, and collaboration remained at the forefront. Feedback from teachers was invaluable, helping us refine our approach and better meet their needs. We also began incorporating more diverse perspectives and inviting guest speakers to share their experiences.

Leading these CoP events and workshops with various institutions (public, semi-private, private schools, and local or international NGOs) has profoundly impacted my personal and professional growth. I’ve developed a deeper understanding of the challenges teachers face and gained new insights into effective teaching and leadership practices. This journey has also taught me the importance of empathy, active listening, and the power of collective problem-solving.

Looking ahead, my vision is to further strengthen our CoP, making it a model for other professional development programs. I aim to continue fostering an environment where teachers feel empowered, supported, and inspired to innovate. By leveraging the collective wisdom and experience of our community, I believe we can drive meaningful change in education, especially in my area (Saida), where many teachers are eager to learn, acquire, and inspire their own communities.



Reflecting on my journey from teacher to leader with QHL, I am filled with gratitude and a sense of accomplishment. The transformation from traditional workshops to dynamic CoP events has not only enhanced our professional development but also enriched my relationships with fellow educators. This experience has underscored the importance of community, collaboration, and continuous learning. I am excited to continue this journey, leading and

learning alongside my peers. This leadership experience has been full of learning, challenges, worries, sharing, and successes, culminating in the gratitude, satisfaction, and pride of what I have achieved and where I have landed in my area. My journey with QHL transformed from the initial uncertainty of conventional training to the profound fulfillment of fostering an empowered and supportive community of educators in different public and private schools and local and international NGOs.

Project Impact: Mirna & Melia

As we look back on our previous sessions, we wanted to provide a recap of our insights we have gathered thus far.

One worth remembering workshop Mirna and I conducted was about Differentiated Instruction (DI) for the educators at the Canadian Academy and Al Bassel School. The goal was to share with the participants valuable knowledge and skills related to DI and to empower them to enhance their teaching practices by applying insights gained during the workshop.

Before the workshop, Mirna and I spent time reviewing and planning the material by selecting engaging activities from what we had acquired through the courses and testing in the micro-credentials program. On the day of the workshop, we arrived early to set up the room logistically with the projector, arrange and classify the materials and handouts. After that, the principal reached us to emphasize the importance of accountability and expressed his expectations for us to show professionalism. Moreover, he blatantly stressed that our actions during the session will determine the success of future meetings and collaborations.

As the participants began to arrive, our first task was to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone felt comfortable in the session.

We started the workshop with an informative session about the organization and QHPLL project. Then, we launched into a series of interactive activities designed to spark and unleash their imagination, such as inciting them to question, wonder, and learn through collaborative storytelling projects and implementing a more open-ended approach to our conversation. This added valuable insights and feedback and was crucial in shaping the dynamics of the workshop.



One activity involved writing short stories based on random prompts. Another activity was a group brainstorming session where they collectively developed story ideas. Throughout the workshop, we encouraged participation and shared practices that we had learned before about differentiating their instruction.

As the workshop progressed, we could see the educators becoming more confident and enthusiastic about their sharing.

By the end of the workshop, the room was buzzing with excitement. The educators thanked us for inspiring them and expressed their eagerness to continue having more

topics and surfing Childhood Education International's Open Educational Resources. It was incredibly gratifying to see the impact we had made on their confidence and the will to thrive, both personally and professionally. Furthermore, the principal had expressed his gratitude for the workshop we conducted on Differentiated Instruction on February 24 and had extended an invitation to join his team in celebrating Teachers' Day taking place the next week. It was a great honor to be recognized for our efforts.

After that, we had scheduled another meeting to further build upon the momentum from the previous session. The meeting was set on May 31st and resulted in positive outcomes that will surely result in more collaboration in the future.

Jehad's Journey: From Homeroom Teacher to Educational Leader

I began my career as a humble homeroom teacher. Despite having a few self-development initiatives to support my fellow teachers, these efforts were modest. However, a significant turning point came when I started volunteering with the QHL project. This experience opened my eyes to the broader needs of teachers, my school, my context, and my students.

Through my involvement in co-creating online courses, I gained a deeper understanding of these needs. I conducted research, collaborated with other teachers, and participated in planning, revising, and piloting these courses. Piloting the courses within my organization provided me with a valuable opportunity to see myself as more capable and aware of my surroundings.



This pivotal stage marked my transformation from being "just a teacher" to becoming a teacher who could enhance my skills and support others. I evolved into a teacher trainer, which significantly boosted my self-confidence. I found myself able to achieve what I had always aspired to do before joining the QHL project. This role fostered flexibility and a two-way learning process.

My journey opened new avenues for engaging with students of various ages. I realized the importance of identifying community needs and co-leading with the community to optimize available resources. My participation in the QHPLL project further heightened my awareness of the significance of CoPs. I reached out to more teachers, adapted resources from the library to meet their needs, and employed diverse strategies and pedagogies to engage in adult learning.

Leadership emerged as one of my most valuable skills. Recently, when a new curriculum was introduced at my school, I took the initiative to summarize and create a yearly plan to

support teacher learning and planning. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the skills I had developed and honed through the QHPLL project.

My role evolved from co-creating resources to facilitating and disseminating them, understanding my community, and fostering CoPs. My perspective on teachers shifted profoundly; I no longer saw them as mere lesson-givers in classrooms. This change in outlook was validated when my school administration evaluated me as a high achiever, a recognition that meant a great deal to me.

Today, I feel more confident wherever I go. My journey has widened my network and connections, enabling me to lead, co-create, take initiatives, and be heard. I have gained the ability to analyze situations and offer my expert opinion, drawing from my extensive experience.

My journey from just a homeroom teacher to a confident educational leader exemplifies the transformative power of continuous learning, community engagement, and self-improvement.

Tools for Teacher Leadership Recognition

There are multiple ways teachers might be recognized within their school, community, or national education system. Examples include assigning formal leadership roles to teacher leaders, offering awards and certifications, moving educators along career and salary ladders as they take on additional leadership responsibilities, and so on.

For the QHPLL Project, and as a means of testing ideas around teacher leadership in Lebanon, the following resources were developed. They include a locally contextualized and co-created definition of teacher leadership by the project team members based in Lebanon, criteria for becoming a QHPLL Project Teacher Leader, and a rubric for evaluation of teacher leaders' portfolios. These resources can be modified and adapted for various settings and systems. They are available in Arabic and French, as well, and can be [located here](#).

Teacher Leadership Credential Structure, QHPLL

Awarded by the Quality Holistic Learning in Lebanon Project Team

Defining Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is both a set of skills and a transformative process in which teachers take actions that positively impact their students, colleagues, institutions, and/or administrative authorities in order to work toward improved educational practices and policies, more inclusive and equitable learning environments, and positive learning and well-being outcomes.

Teacher leaders are confident in taking risks and standing up for decisions — supported by experience, expertise, and evidence — they believe will contribute to positive change within an education system.

There is no scale for these decisions, and as such, there are no trivial actions; they all matter and all can make a change. All teachers are leaders or have the potential to be leaders.

Teacher leaders keep learners at the center of their work, getting to know them at every possible opportunity and in multiple ways as holistic, complex, and co-creative people.

At the same time, teacher leaders prioritize their own professional development, acknowledging that lifetime learning is critical for growth.

The qualities of teacher leaders include but are not limited to integrity, empathy, commitment, effective communication skills, collaboration, courage, discernment, generosity, initiative, positivity, passion, problem-solving abilities, and a sense of responsibility.

Note

Applicants for the leadership credential will need to [submit a portfolio of documents](#) and evidence as part of their application.

Criteria

All of the following [criteria](#) need to be met in order for an applicant to be awarded the “Teacher Leader Certificate” by the Quality Holistic Learning in Lebanon (QHPLL) Team.

- 1) *At least* two QHPLL workshops attended from [CE International OER Library](#) resources (to be verified by a QHPLL Team Leader)
 - 1 QHPLL information session is a must
 - 1 additional session presented by QHPLL project team members on a topic of the applicant’s choice
- 2) Two completed CE International online courses (at a minimum) [available on Eureka through the Center for Professional Learning](#) (earned certificates must be shared)
- 3) 1 CE International [micro-credential](#) minimum earned successfully (earned badge must be shared)
- 4) Demonstrated leadership initiative in their context / community (e.g., leading a learning space) on holistic learning. As proof of this, the applicant can submit one or more of the following artifacts:
 - Letter from supervisor or principal that details the applicant’s work leading the initiative
 - Recording of the applicant leading the initiative (workshop, webinar, etc.) in the case of leading in a community without a supervisor or principal

- 5) Actively participating in a CoP run by QHPLL team member(s) as verified by the CoP leaders.
- 6) A one-page reflection in which the applicant states how their work illustrates the ideas reflected in the teacher leadership definition above.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the form to apply for the credential. **We recommend carefully reviewing the rubric below before submitting.**

Teacher Leadership Credential Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Does not meet expectation <i>*A value of 0 is assigned if nothing is submitted*</i> 4	Meets expectation 7	Exceeds expectation 10	Notes from evaluator
At least two QHPLL workshops attended on CE International OER Library resources. (to be verified by a QHPLL Team Leader) -1 QHPLL Information session -1 additional session presented by QHPLL project team members on a topic of the applicant's choice	Attends 1 workshop	Attends 2 workshops	Attends 3 workshops or more	
Two completed CE International online courses (at a minimum) available on Eureka's through the Center for Professional Learning, (earned certificates must be shared)	Completes 1 online course	Completes 2 online courses	Completes 3 online courses or more	
1 CE International microcredential minimum earned successfully (earned badge must be shared)	Submission of a micro-credential but not yet earned badge	Fully completes and earns 1 microcredential badge	Completes and successfully earns 2 microcredential badges or more	
Demonstrated leadership initiative in their context / community (ex: leading a learning space) on holistic learning. As proof of this, the applicant can submit one or more of the following artifacts: -Letter from supervisor or principal that details the applicant's work leading the initiative -Recording of the applicant leading the initiative (workshop, webinar, etc) in the case of leading in a community without a supervisor or principal	Letter or recording reflect a desire to lead. Continued professional growth this applicant is involved in can help make them a teacher leader one day.	Submitted letter or recording reflect confidence and competencies to act as a teacher leader.	Submitted letter AND recording reflect an exceptional readiness to act as a teacher leader.	
Actively participating in a community of practice run by QHPLL team member(s) as verified by the CoP leaders.	Inactive involvement in the community of practice as determined by the CoP leader.	Satisfactory involvement in the community of practice as determined by the CoP leader.	Very active involvement in the community of practice as determined by the CoP leader.	
A one page reflection in which the applicant states how their work illustrates the ideas reflected in the teacher leadership definition above.	Applicant's teacher leadership statement reflects few (less than 4) characteristics of teacher leaders as provided in the definition of teacher leadership and provides examples of how they enact that teacher leadership in their daily practice.	Applicant's teacher leadership statement reflects 4-6 characteristics of teacher leaders as provided in the definition of teacher leadership and provides examples of how they enact that teacher leadership in their daily practice.	Applicant's teacher leadership statement reflects all characteristics of teacher leaders as provided in the definition of teacher leadership and provides examples of how they enact that teacher leadership in their daily practice.	

Total needed to pass: 42
Applicant's score: ____

Conclusion: Key Insights and Recommendations

The journey of co-creating CoPs has demonstrated the transformative power of collaborative and reflective dialogue among teachers. These shared experiences have reshaped our understanding of community needs, underscoring the vital role of social learning spaces in fostering effective learning communities.

Key Insights

1. Transformation Beyond Traditional Professional Development:

- CoPs provide spaces for teachers to connect personally, share experiences, and collaboratively solve challenges.
- This approach moves away from trainer-oriented models to empower teachers with autonomy and leadership in their lifelong learning.

2. Community Engagement:

- Inclusive collaboration with all stakeholders, including parents, enriches the learning environment and ensures sustainability.
- Engaging principals and ensuring their support and involvement is critical for the successful implementation of CoPs.

3. Personalized Development:

- Tailored development plans that recognize the unique needs and career stages of each teacher are essential.
- Teacher growth should be reflected in student outcomes, emphasizing the importance of active engagement and continuous improvement.

4. Teachers' Well-being and Leadership:

- CoPs address teachers' physical, emotional, and social well-being as they have a say on the structure, dynamics, and flow of CoP sessions.
- CoPs support teachers' leadership as they help teachers lead their own learning journeys, provide space for innovation, and apply critical decision-making to their practices inside and outside the classroom.

Recommendations

1. **Foster Inclusive Collaboration:**

- Actively involve all community stakeholders in CoP activities to build a supportive and collaborative environment.

2. **Promote Personalized Professional Development:**

- Develop individualized plans and diverse learning pathways for teachers to address their specific needs and career stages.

3. **Enhance Principal Engagement:**

- Educate and engage principals in CoP concepts to ensure they support and promote these practices within their schools.

4. **Ensure Sustainability:**

- Focus on creating CoPs that are well-resourced and capable of operating independently, driven by the teachers and administrators within the schools.

5. **Prioritize Well-Being and Support:**

- Foster a culture where teachers feel valued and supported and prioritize their well-being alongside professional development.

6. **Address Common Challenges:**

- Work on overcoming fixed mindsets, securing necessary resources, and managing time constraints to ensure continuous commitment to CoP activities.

7. **Promote Teacher Leadership:**

- Work collaboratively with teachers to help them understand what their leadership entails in breadth and depth and apply such leadership in their own contexts.

Epilogue

Closing Words from a QHPLL Project Fellow/Educator in Bekaa

QHPLL: A Year of Collective Brilliance

In the past year, I had the honor of being part of an extraordinary educational team (QHPLL)—one that radiated brilliance and distinction. Together, we wove dreams into reality, orchestrated plans with precision, and celebrated shared achievements.

Dreaming Together

Our dreams weren't solitary whispers; they were a symphony. We envisioned vibrant classrooms, ignited curiosity, and saw the spark of understanding light up young minds.

We dreamed of inclusive spaces—where every student felt seen, heard, and valued. Our collective imagination painted a canvas of possibility.

Planning in Harmony

Our planning sessions were more than logistics; they were harmonies. We sat around tables, minds interwoven, mapping out pathways to growth.

We dissected curriculum, explored innovative methods, and choreographed lessons that resonated with diverse learners. Our plans weren't rigid; they flowed like a river, adapting to student needs.

Achieving Together

Finally, our achievements weren't solitary victories; they were shared triumphs. When a struggling reader cracked the code, when a teacher witnessed a breakthrough in a student's confidence—we all rejoiced.

Our collective effort bore fruit—the kind that nourished not just academic progress, but also the spirit of collaboration.

Our workshops weren't monologues; they were dialogues. We reflected, questioned, and refined. We shared stories—the “aha” moments, the setbacks that fueled resilience.

Differentiated Instruction

In the realm of education, differentiated instruction has become our guiding symphony. Gone are the days of teaching to the mythical "average student." Instead, we now compose personalized teaching styles that resonate with each unique learner.

Our approach involves crafting tiered assignments, acknowledging that growth is not always linear. Some students require scaffolding, while others soar independently. We also embrace flexible grouping, allowing collaboration to

flourish and harmonize within the classroom.

In this way of learning, we worked with teachers and educators, from many schools and educational institutes, to confirm that every student has their own instrument, playing a vital role in the grand composition of knowledge and growth.

With PSS Workshops

Together, we wove empathy into lesson plans, teaching students not just math or history, but also kindness and compassion. We practiced active listening, not just with our ears, but with our hearts—understanding the unspoken fears of a child, the silent struggles of a colleague.

With Asset-Based Pedagogies Workshops: Unearthing Hidden Gems

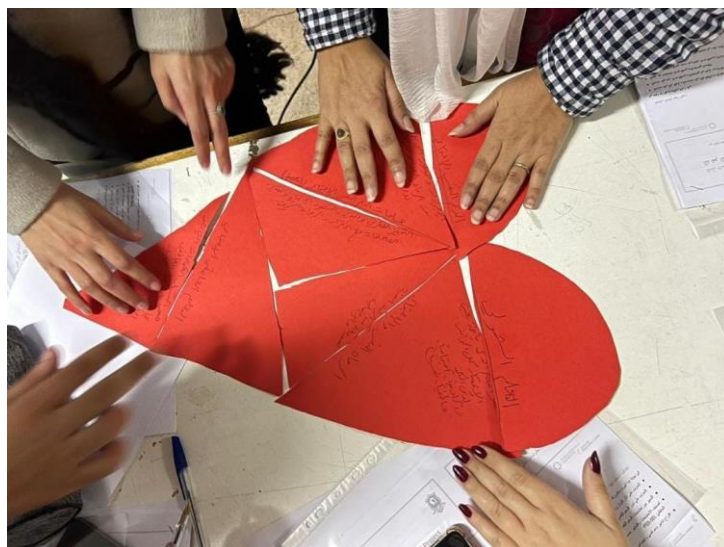
We had delved into asset-based pedagogies—the art of seeing brilliance where others saw gaps. In those workshops, we unearthed hidden gems—the resilience of a struggling student, the creativity of a quiet artist, the untapped potential in every corner of the classroom.

Our discussions weren't just theoretical; they were rooted in the soil of real classrooms. We celebrated diverse strengths—the student who could weave stories effortlessly, the teacher with an innate ability to connect with parents.

We became a community—a mosaic of educators, each with a unique hue. Our tapestry bore witness to growth, vulnerability, and the beauty of imperfection.

As I reflect on this transformative year, I stand in awe of our team's brilliance. We weren't just educators; we were architects of possibility. And together, we built bridges toward brighter futures.

- Mahmoud Ibrahim Al Dughaiman



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